

## VERMONT

Hello, my name is Stephanie Lyons and I work in the Economic/Political office at the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. I'm here to talk to you about my beautiful home state of Vermont.

Vermont was settled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the French and the British. There were many conflicts between the two nations, but the land was given to the British after the French were defeated in the French and Indian war. Vermont declared independence from the original 13 colonies during the American Revolution and in 1790, Vermont was admitted to the Union as the 14<sup>th</sup> state.

I was born and raised in a small town called Mendon, 15 minutes away from Killington Ski Resort, which is the largest mountain in the Eastern United States. From the summit, you can see a panoramic view of four states -- Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New York, and you can even see into Canada!

The name "Vermont" comes from the French words "mont vert" which means "green mountains" – not surprising since almost everywhere you look in the State, you see gorgeous rolling green mountains. About 77% of the state is covered by forest and the rest is covered by meadows, uplands, lakes, ponds, and marshes.

Vermont has something for everyone with its four seasons – it offers outstanding skiing at mountains such as Killington, Stowe, Stratton, Smuggler's Notch and Mad River Glen. In the fall, you can take a panoramic drive around the state and enjoy the world-famous reds, oranges, and yellows of fall foliage. In the summer, grab your swimsuit and dive into one of the many lakes and ponds dotting the green mountains. And spring is the time for hiking and camping – Vermonters love to get into the great outdoors and stay active. I guess this explains why Vermont has repeatedly been ranked number one as the healthiest state to live in.

Vermont has a population of a little over half a million, making it the 2<sup>nd</sup> least populous state in the US. And in ratio of cows to people, Vermont has the greatest number of dairy cows in the country! Not surprising, since dairy farming is the number one agricultural activity in the state.

Vermont's capital, Montpelier, is the smallest state capital in terms of population, and is still the only state capital in the U.S. without a McDonald's. And Vermont's state capitol building is one of only a few to have a beautiful gold dome roof.

Vermont is very well known for many delicious culinary treats. Perhaps the most famous is Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream! Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield co-founded this eccentric, one-of-a-kind ice cream company after combining their \$8,000 life savings with a \$4,000 bank loan, and then leasing an old gas station building in Burlington, Vermont. They started serving ice cream in May 1978.

Using an old-fashioned ice cream freezer, they began churning out those rich & creamy, fun & chunky ice cream flavors. Their ice cream was such a hit that it wasn't long before they began selling it to local restaurants, then grocery stores throughout Vermont, and today – all over the globe. But people aren't the only ones who enjoy this cool treat -- Ben & Jerry's gives their ice cream waste to the local Vermont farmers who use it to feed their hogs. The hogs seem to like all of the flavors except Mint Oreo.

Vermont is also the largest producer of maple syrup in the country. Every year, Vermont turns out over 1 million gallons of maple syrup, which accounts for 40% of the U.S.'s total production. Vermont is also home to famous Cabot creamery, maker of first-class Cabot cheese and dairy products. Hungry yet??

Vermont also produces a famously delicious microbrew beer called Long Trail Ale. The brewery's name derives from the Long Trail, a 270 mile hiking trail that snakes through the Green Mountains. Long Trail is one of Vermont's most progressive and forward-thinking breweries and uses the ECO process, which stands for Environmentally Conscious Operations. One example of their eco-friendly operations is through the use of "Cow Power" – A process through which an electric company harnesses methane from cow manure and uses a digester machine to convert it to energy. Twenty five percent of Long Trail's power is "cow power," making it the largest corporation out there using cow power!

Of course, Vermont also has its share of important political figures. Two U.S. Presidents were born there: Chester Alan Arthur was the 21<sup>st</sup> President of the United States and was born in Fairfield, Vermont on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1830. And Calvin Coolidge, the 30<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, was born in Plymouth on July 4, 1872 -- Independence Day!

You may be familiar with some other high profile Vermonters -- Austria's von Trapp family, from the famous Sound of Music film, calls Vermont home. The von Trapp family left Austria before its annexation by Germany in 1938. In the early 1940's, the family toured the United States as the Trapp Family Singers and eventually settled in Stowe, Vermont on an enchanted farm with sweeping mountain views reminiscent of their beloved Austria.

In the 1950s, the family opened a 27-room ski lodge in Vermont. Unfortunately, the lodge was destroyed in 1980 by a fire. Three years later, a new Austrian-style lodge with 93 rooms was opened, where travelers from all around the world regularly enjoy traditional Austrian food, drink, and outdoor activities.

Vermont is also home to first rate schools. Middlebury College, a private liberal arts college located in Middlebury, Vermont was founded in 1800, and is one of the best liberal arts colleges in the U.S., regularly ranked in the top 10. And the University of Vermont is a premier small public research university nationally acclaimed for excellence in liberal education, medicine, biology, and environmental studies. UVM's setting in a valley on the shores of Lake Champlain, between the Adirondack and the Green Mountain ranges, make it a beautiful place to study. And speaking of Lake Champlain, did you know that legend has it that Champ – Vermont's version of the Loch Ness Monster – lives in the Lake? There have been numerous accounts through the years of people spotting a gigantic water serpent swimming around the lake. Famous photographs and video footage from 1977 and 2005 claim to show clear images of Champ!

So...I hope you'll have the chance to visit my home state of Vermont one day! Come to enjoy some maple syrup, a Long Trail beer, some skiing, hiking, and gorgeous fall foliage. Vermonters look forward to welcoming you!